

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4002

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 GENEVA 9668

NODIS CHEROKEE

TO THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH U

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: CLARIFYING OPTIONS

1. AS I COME TO THE END OF MY CONSULTATIONS IN GENEVA AND ASSESS THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS HERE, AS WELL AS MY CONVERSATIONS WITH KAUNDA AND NYERERE, I CAN SEE THE CONFERENCE COMING TO THREE POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS. THE PRINCIPAL STICKING POINT, AS IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW, IS THE COUNCIL OF STATES AND THE DEGREE OF POWER SHARING THAT BODY IMPLIES.

2. STALEMATE. THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE DELEGATIONS, TOGETHER WITH THEIRS AND OUR PRIVATE TALKS WITH THE OBSERVERS, INDICATE THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD END IN A STALEMATE. WHILE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ARE PREPARED TO ADMIT AN IMPORTANT DEGREE OF POWER SHARING WITH WHITE RHODESIANS INSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF ANNEX C, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND ITS FRONT LINE SUPPORTERS ARE NOT. THE RHODESIANS ARE CLINGING TO THE FIVE POINTS AND THEIR INSISTENCE MUST BE INTERPRETED AS MORE THAN RHETORICAL. THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS AND DO NOT MAINTAIN ANY EFFECTIVE LIAISON WITH THE CONFERENCE MODERATES. IVOR RICHARD'S BEST EFFORTS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE DAYS BETWEEN NOW AND 20HDECEMBER

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COULD BE CONSUMED IN STRENUOUS BQT POINTLESS ARGUMENTS.

ON DEC 20, THE BRITISH WOULD ADJOUR THE CONFERENCE FOR A CHRISTMAS RECESS. IN SO DOING, MUGABE'S DELEGATION, PARTICULARLY THE ZIPA EXTREMISTS, COULD THEN DECIDE THAT THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WAS ONCE AGAIN IN QUESTION AND RETURN TO AFRICA WITH NO INTENTION OF CONVENING IN GENEVA AFTER THE HOLIDAYS. ALL THE OBSERVERS I HAVE MET STATE STRONGLY IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT THE CONFERENCE TOGETHER AGAIN AFTER CHRISTMAS AND INSIST THE DELIBERATIONS MUST BE COMPLETED BY DEC 20.

3. IN THE WEEKS BEFORE DEC 20, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BACKED BY THE FRONT LINE STATES, WILL ARGUE FOR A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN WHICH POWER WAS SHIFTED TOTALLY INTO NATIONALIST - AND PRESUMABLY LARGELY TO PATRIOTIC FRONT - HANDS. THE BRITISH WILL BE CALLED ON TO PROVIDE A LEGITIMIZING BUT LARGELY SYMBOLIC UMBRELLA, AND FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES THE RHODESIA FRONT WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. DURING THESE WEEKS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA COULD BE PUSHED OFF THEIR MORE MODERATE POSITIONS INTO A GREATER DEGREE OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S STAND. SMITH'S PEOPLE, MEANWHILE, WILL DIG IN AND ACCURE THEIR NATIONALIST OPPOSITES OF LIVING IN AN "ALICE-IN-WONDERLAND" WORLD

4. IF THE CONFERENCE RECESSED AND ONE OR MORE OF THE DELEGATIONS FAILED TO RETURN, THE BRITISH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY REVERT TO THEIR PROPOSAL THAT THE CONFERENCE STAND ADJOURNED WHILE A NEW FRAMEWORK WAS NEGOTIATED IN AFRICA. THEY WOULD LOOK TO US TO SIGN SMITH AND VORSTER ONTO A NEW UNDERSTANDING AND WOULD CALL ON OUR HELP WITH THE AFRICANS.

5. PROCEEDING WITHOUT ZIPA. A SECOND POSSIBLE OUTCOME WOULD BE A CONFERENCE WITHOUT ZIPA. THE BRITISH COULD TRY TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE AND COUNT ON BREAKING UP THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND BRINGING NKOMO INTO A MODERATE COALITION. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE NKOMO WILL FIND HIS ALLIANCE WITH MUGABE INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE AS DEC 20 APPROACHES, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT

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HE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO SEPARATE HIMSELF AND HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION HE SEES IT IN HIS INTERESTS TO DO SO. THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WILL WORK ACTIVELY AGAINST A DIVORCE; THE BITTER DIVISIONS BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUZOREWA WILL NOT SUBSIDE; AND NKOMO WOULD CONCLUDE THAT HE CANNOT RULE AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE IN COALITION WITH SMITH, SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA, FACED WITH THE OPPOSITION OF THE FRONT LINE STATES AND ZIPA.

IT IS FURTHERMORE NOT CLEAR THAT SMITH IS PREPARED TO SHARE SUFFICIENT POWER WITH NKOMO TO MAKE THIS OUTCOME AN ATTRACTIVE ONE FOR NKOMO. UNLESS NKOMO WAS ASSURED OF ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE AMERICAN, BRITISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT, HE WILL NOT BE ATTRACTED TO SUCH A CHANCY CONCLUSION

6. A BRITISH COMPROMISE. WE AND THE BRITISH HAVE SAID ALL ALONG THAT THE PRICE FOR A SETTLEMENT MIGHT BE A GREATER DEGREE OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT. IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE EXTENT OF BRITISH PARTICIPATION WILL IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS HAVE TO BE MUCH GREATER THAN ANYTHING WE ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED. THE FRONT LINE STATES AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ARE ARGUING THAT THEY CAME TO GENEVA WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT POWER WOULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM SMITH TO THE BRITISH AND THAT THEY WILL SETTLE ONLY WITH THE BRITISH. SMITH HAS RAISED PUBLICLY AND VAN DER BYL, SQUIRES, PARTRIDGE AND GAYLARD IN GENEVA HAVE SAID PRIVATELY TO US THAT WHITE RHODESIA IS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER MORE THAN A SYMBOLIC BRITISH TAKEOVER. THE GENEVA DELEGATION HAS SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT RHODESIA'S SECURITY FORCES WILL NOT OBEY BRITISH ORDERS OR ACCEPT BRITISH COMMANDERS. FOR OPENERS, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SEEMS ALSO TO BE ASSUJING THAT BRITAIN WOULD PLAY A LARGELY SYMBOLIC ROLE, BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT THIS IS A NEGOTIATING POSITION AND IT HAS SOME GIVE. THE FRONT WOULD BE UNDER SUBSTANTIAL FRONT LINE PRESSURE TO ACCEPT A GREATER DEGREE OF BRITISH POWER.

7. REVIEWING THE THREE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES, I CONCLUDE THAT STALEMATE MUST BE AVOIDED. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO RECONVENE IN GENEVA AFTER CHRISTMAS IF THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNED ON DEC 20 IN DEADLOCK.

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NYERERE WOULD BE TEMPTED TO ESCALATE HIS DEMANDS TO NEW AND EVEN MORE IMPOSSIBLE LEVELS. WE WOULD BE FACED WITH THE SAME IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA THAT WE CONFRONTED WHEN OUR INITIATIVE BEGAN. I BELIEVE, FURTHERMORE, THAT THE CHANCES OF KEEPING THE CONFERENCE GOING WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ARE NIL. OBTAINING NKOMO'S PARTICIPATION WOULD REQUIRE THAT WE, THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE BRITISH ASSURE HIM OF FULL SUPPORT AGAINST HIS FRONT LINE AND ZIPA OPPOSITION. I DO NOT FEEL THAT THE AFRICAN MODERATES - KAUNDA AND KHAMA INCLUDED - WILL BREAK RANKS WITH NYERERE AND ENCOURAGE NKOMO TO PURSUE THIS RISKY COURSE. MOREOVER NKOMO IS NOT INTERESTED IN THIS OUTCOME.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4003

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 GENEVA 9668

NODIS CHEROKEE

TO THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

8. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT A STRATEGY OF SIMPLY HAMMERING AWAY AT A BASICALLY ANNEX C PLAY MAY NOT FINALLY YIELD RESULTS. AT BEST, HOWEVER, THIS COURSE WILL INVOLVE LONG, TEDIOUS, POINT-BY-POINT NEGOTIATIONS, PROBABLY LASTING FROM FOUR TO SIX MONTHS. I DOUBT THAT DELEGATIONS WILL REMAIN IN GENEVA FOR THIS EXTENDED PERIOD, AND WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL AFRICAN DYNAMICS. STILL, THIS MAY BE THE COURSE WHICH WE MUST TRY TO FOLLOW IF WE ARE TO CONVINCE SMITH AND VORSTER THAT "THE CONTRACT" HAS BEEN DULY SUPPORTED.

9. SEEKING A GREATER DEGREE OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IN AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT MAY OFFER AN OPENING. WE FACE 3 PROBLEMS IN THIS REGARD. FIRST, LONDON MAY NOT BE WILLING TO OFFER SO EARLY IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS THE OPTION OF A HIGH BRITISH PFOFILE. SECOND, SMITH WILL BE NOTABLY RESISTANT AND HIS SOUTH AFRICAN FRIENDS WILL HAVE TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE BRITISH MEAN AND HAVE THE ABILITY TO ASSURE AN IMPARTIAL AND SMOOTH TRANSITION. THIRD, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WILL HAVE TO BE ASSURED OF THE SAME.

10. THE CABINET HAS NOT YET LOOKED AT A PACKAGE OF BRITISH RESPONSIBILITIES. SPEAKING INFORMALLY, RICHARD BELIEVES THAT A BRITISH PRESENCE WOULD INCLUDE A GOVERNOR

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GENERAL WHO WOULD EXERCISE THE BREAKING AUTHORITY WITHIN A BODY SIMILAR TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE. (IN FACT, RICHARD HAS ALREADY DEPARTED FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE CONCEPT IN HIS INFORMAL PRESENTATION OF AN INNER OR "WAR CABINET" AND THE OBSERVERS OF LEAST, AND PROBABLY THE NATIONALISTS, HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THIS THINLY NUANCED DEPARTURE.) THE GOVERNOR GENERAL MIGHT ALSO CHAIR THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN ORDER TO ASSIST THE CONFERENCE IN OVERCOMING THE HURDLE OF WHO AMONG THE NATIONALIST LEADERS WOULD BE FIRST CHIEF MINISTER. WITH RESPECT TO THE ARMED FORCES, BRITAIN WILL CERTAINLY RESIST ASSIGNING AN ACTIVE DUTY BRITISH OFFICER OR OFFICERS TO TAKE COMMAND. THERE MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT HIRING RETIRED BRITISH OFFICERS TO ASSUME SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES IN RHODESIA. THE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS THEIR CONTRACT LEADERSHIP WOULD TAKE AN OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN.

11. A BRITISH ROLE ALONG THESE LINES DOES MEAN A SUBSTANTIAL DEPARTURE FROM THE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK WE HAVE HOPED WOULD BE FOLLOWED DURING THE CONFERENCE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT THE PRICE OF A SETTLEMENT MIGHT BE BRITISH PARTICIPATION. PARTICIPATION TO THE EXTENT THAT RICHARD IS DESCRIBING IT MUST BE SOLD TO SMITH AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS AS WELL AS THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND THE NATIONALISTS. I AM NOT SURE THAT SMITH AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL SEE A BRITISH ROLE AS A BARGAIN OR EVEN THAT THE AFRICANS WILL NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A BRITISH OFFER TO ESCALATE ANEW THEIR DEMANDS. IT SEEMS CERTAIN, NEVERTHELESS, THAT A SETTLEMENT CANNOT BE REACHED IN GENEVA UNLESS SOMETHING LIKE THIS DEGREE OF BRITISH PARTICIPATION IS TRIED.

12. STATED DIFFERENTLY, THE CURRENT SIGNS ARE THAT ANNEX C IN ITS PRESENT FORM CANNOT BE SOLD TO THE NATIONALISTS OR THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS. THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT A TWO TIERED GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE TOP TIER CONTAINS EQUAL EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN MEMBERSHIP AND HAS THE AUTHORITIES WHICH THE FIVE POINTS IN ANNEX C DESCRIBE. THE VERY PRINCIPLE OF A TWO TIERED

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GOVERNMENT IS IN SERIOUS QUESTION AND IS FACED WITH SUCH STIFF PATRIOTIC FRONT AND FRONT LINE OPPOSITION THAT ITS SURVIVAL IS MOST UNLIKELY.

13. THE RHODESIANS HAVE NOT COME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION. VAN DER BYL CONTINUES TO ARGUE THAT IF THE BRITISH TABLE THE FIVE POINTS OR ANNEX C AND STOOD FIRMLY BY THEM THE NATIONALISTS WOULD GIVE IN. IF THEY AND THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS DO NOT GIVE IN, HIS RECOMMENDATION TO ME AND TO RICHARD WAS THAT BRITAIN AND THE US CONSIDER CUTTING OFF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE FRONT LINE NATIONS, BLOCKADING THE COAST AND CUTTING OFF OIL DELIVERIES. THE BRITISH TRIED THESE PRESSURE TACTICS AGAINST RHODESIA AND MIGHT AS WELL, IN ALL FAIR PLAY, USE THEM AGAIN, HE ARGUES. EVEN THOUGH WE SHOULD DISCOUNT VAN DER BYL'S RHETORIC TO SOME DEGREE, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT NEITHER SALISBURY NOR PRETORIA HAS ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR A NEW FRAMEWORK WHICH ASSUMES AN EXPANDED BRITISH PRESENCE. PRETORIA MAY HAVE SOME INKLING OF WHAT THE BRITISH HAVE IN MIND. FOURIE BRIEFED IN GENERAL

TERMS IN LONDON BY DENNIS GRENNAN ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29. FOURIE ASKED QUESTIONS, MADE NO COMMITMENT, BUT DID NOT SEEM TO BE DISTURBED. THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE ALSO SEEN CROSLAND'S THURSDAY STATEMENT BY NOW.

14. EVEN IN THE COURSE OF THE FOUR DAYS THAT THE CONFERENCE HAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO CONCLUDE THAT WE NOW HAVE OR SOON WILL HAVE BEFORE US THREE UNAPPEALING TRCTICAL OPTIONS.

15. FIRST, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO LET THE NATIONALISTS TALK THEMSELVES OUT A BIT MORE (SAY UNTIL DEC 10) AND THEN TABLE ANNEX C WITH A SLIGHT OVERLAY WHICH WILL PROVIDE FOR A SYMBOLIC BRITISH PRESENCE. THE BRITISH HAVE PREPARED LOCALLY A DRAFT DOCUMENT WHICH FITS THIS PURPOSE. WE ARE SUBMITTING IT BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM UNDER THE TITLE OF "SUGGESTED CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERIM PERIOD." THE DOCUMENT, AS THE BRITISH POINT OUT, IS THIN. ITS DEFINITION OF BRITISH

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RESPONSIBILITY IS NARROW TO THE POINT OF ALMOST BEING NON-EXISTENT; THE PAPER IS ANNEX C, REDRAFTED TO INCLUDE AN ENGLISHMAN WHO WOULD PRESIDE WITHOUT POWERS OVER A COUNCIL OF STATE BY ANOTHER NAME. THE BRITISH ARE AFRAID THAT IF THEY SURFACE THIS DOCUMENT OR SOMETHING LIKE IT, THE GROUNDSWELL AMONG THE NATIONALISTS AND THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WILL BE SO SEVERE THAT A MORE CAREFULLY ELABORATED PLAN, INVOLVING A GREATER DEGREE OF BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY, WOULD BECOME UNSALEABLE. THE NATIONALISTS BACKED BY THE

FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS HAVE MADE THEIR POINT CLEAR; THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT A COUNCIL OF STATE WITH EQUAL EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN PARTICIPATION SINCE THEY BELIEVE SMITH WILL USE THAT INSTRUMENT TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL BE AN UNACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR INDEPENDENCE. NKOMO TOLD ME SO IN THOSE WORDS. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DOES NOT BELIEVE PROGRESS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE IS IRREVERSIBLE, EVEN ONCE AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS IN PLACE. ITS LUST FOR POWER IS OFFSET BY ITS PROFOUND DISTRUST OF SMITH. AT LEAST TRYING TO SELL A REWRITTEN ANNEX C - EVEN THOUGH DEFEAT IS SURE - HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF SHOWING TO THE RHODESIANS AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO OBTAIN A SETTLEMENT IN GENEVA WITHOUT A HIGHER LEVEL OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT. WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE RHODESIANS DO NOT BELIEVE THE BRITISH HAVE GIVEN THE FIVE POINTS AND ANNEX C A HARD RUN. THE BRITISH KNOW FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE TO DATE THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD A RUN THEY GIVE ANNEX C, WITHOUT A MUCH MORE EXPLICIT DEGREE OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT A SETTLEMENT WILL NOT BE NEGOTIATED. INTENTIONALLY OR NOT, THE BRITISH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN DEFEAT INTO ACCOUNT IN THEIR PLANNING AND ACTIONS. THE DISCUSSION OF AN INNER OR WAR CABINET AS A POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT FOR AN UPPER TIER AND THEIR HINTS ABOUT A GOVERNOR GENERAL HAVE COME CLOSE TO CUTTING GROUND FROM UNDER ANNEX C. WE, AT LEAST, DO NOT SHARE RESPONSIBILITY WITH THE BRITISH IN THIS MATTER. WHILE THEY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES TO ANNEX C, WE HAVE STUCK TO OUR PROMISE TO THE RHODESIANS AND HAVE SOLD HARD THE CONCEPT OF CHECKS AND BALANCES, POWER SHARING, AND A NEGOTIATED TWO TIER GOVERNMENT.

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NODIS CHEROKEE

TO THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

14. SECOND, BRITISH ARE CONSIDERING CARRYING ON THE CONFERENCE THROUGH THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 6 ALLOWING EACH DELEGATION, THE RHODESIANS INCLUDED, TO FURTHER REFINE THEIR NEGOTIATION POSITIONS. AT THE END OF THE WEEK RICHARD WOULD PROCEED TO LONDON AND CONSULT YOU AND CROSLAND. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD AT THE SAME TIME DECIDE ON A PACKAGE OF BRITISH RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH THE CABINET COULD SUPPORT. WITH YOUR AND CROSLAND'S AGREEMENT, RICHARD WOULD RETURN ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 13 AND RECESS THE CONFERENCE FOR THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD. (RICHARD TELLS ME HE HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO THE IDEA OF A RECESS IN THE LAST 24 HOURS.) DURING THE RECESS, ANNEX C, REVISED HEAVILY TO INCLUDE A HIGHER LEVEL OF BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE SOLD TO THE FRONT LINE PREISDENTS, THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE RHODESIANS. CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO MAKING SURE THAT THE NATIONALISTS ARE CONSULTED DURING THE PROCESS. THE BRITISH WOULD, OF COURSE, COUNT ON US TO CARRY THE BALL IN SALISBURY AND PRETORIA. THEY SUGGEST THEY WOULD ASSUME THE MAJORITY OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FRONT LINE STATES.

17. THE APPROACH RICHARD - AND WE MUST ASSUME LONDON - IS CONSIDERING OFFERS A VARIETY OF RISKS. PRINCIPALLY, WE WOULD FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW NATIONALIST AND FRONT LINE DEMANDS. WE WOULD ALSO BE CONFRONTED WITH
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AN ALL TOO LIKELY POSSIBILITY THAT THE NATIONALISTS - OR SOME IMPORTANT PORTION OF THEM - WOULD NOT REUTRN TO A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE. IN THE LIGHT OF THE STATEMENTS WE HAVE HEARD FROM VAN DER BYL, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THE RHODESIANS AND PERHAPS THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD BUY AN APPROACH WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A GREATER DEGREE OF BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY. HOWEVER VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS IN GENEVA, A NEW FRAMEWORK WHICH CARRIES GREATER BRITISH INVOLVEMENT APPEARS TO BE THE ONLY POSSIBLE WAY OF ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT HERE.

18. THIRD, IT IS POSSIBLE TO THINK OF CARRYING ON IN GENEVA UNTIL DEC 20 DEALING THE PAPERS WHICH THE NATIONALISTS HAVE PRESENTED AND THE IDEAS WHICH WE UNDERSTAND THE RHODESIANS WILL PUT FORWARD ON DEC 4. RICHARD COULD ORGANIZE THE CONFERENCE INTO SUB-COMMITTEES AND LET THE PARTIES EXHAUST THEMSELVES IN PALAVER. PROSPECTS FOR AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT ARE DIM AND THE CONFERENCE WOULD FIND ITSELF ON DECEMBER 19 DEADLOCKED. WHILE EACH PARTY WOULD HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE OTHER HAS IN MIND, WE WOULD BE NO CLOSE TO A SETTLEMENT AND THE CHANCE THAT THE DEADLOCK WOULD TURN INTO A BREAKDOWN WOULD BE REAL. MY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE RHODESIANS AND PAST REPORTING ON THEIR STATE OF MIND MAY INDICATE THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY WITH THIS OUTCOME. SMITH WOULD HAVE EVERY TEMPTATION TO BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT HIS OWN VERSION OF THE "KISSINGER PLAN."

19. ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE OPTIONS ARE ATTRACTIVE, SOME VERSION OF THE SECOND OPTION - THAT OF SEEKING A NEW FRAMEWORK BASED ON A HIGHER LEVEL OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT - SEEMS TO BE THE LEAST UNATTRACTIVE SOLUTION.

20. I AM NOT CERTAIN THAT WE CAN SELL BRITISH INVOLVEMENT TO PRETORIA AND SALISBURY AND THEREBY TRY TO AVOID A DEC 20 RECESS BUT IF THE CONFERENCE RECESSES, I AM INCLINED TO TAKE THE OBSERVERS SERIOUSLY AND BELIEVE WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO BRING GENEVA TOGETHER AGAIN. CATTO

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